

**SER**  
**SOCIETY FOR  
 ECOLOGICAL  
 RESTORATION**

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**GLOBAL  
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**SER2011**  
 WORLD CONFERENCE ON  
 ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

[www.ser2011.org](http://www.ser2011.org)

# SERNews

The Newsletter of the Society for Ecological Restoration

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## SER2011 Carbon Offsets Support Local Restoration Projects

By Elaine Muir, Plan Vivo Foundation  
 Edited by Christine Chau, Society for Ecological Restoration

SER is pleased to be collaborating with BlueGreen Carbon to ensure that the SER2011 World Conference on Ecological Restoration is a certified carbon neutral event. The SER2011 Conference Organizing Committee initiated this effort to not only reduce the conference's carbon footprint, but to support local restoration efforts. For every registered attendee, SER will donate US\$20 to Plan Vivo's Scolel Té Project, which rewards rural communities in Oaxaca and Chiapas, Mexico for generating long-term carbon, livelihood and ecosystem benefits. SER hopes to continue this tradition with subsequent world conferences. Visit <http://www.ser2011.org/en/registration/carbon-offset/> for more information on SER2011 carbon offsets.

### Plan Vivo At-a-Glance

Plan Vivo is a system for developing community-based payments for ecosystem services projects and programs. Plan Vivo project activities (i.e. afforestation and agroforestry, forest conservation, restoration and avoided deforestation) are designed to generate long-term, verifiable carbon services, improve livelihoods, and restore and protect ecosystems.

The rationale for Plan Vivo is simple. There is a fundamental link between rural poverty, environmental degradation,



*Farmers prepare nursery beds for seedlings*

and climate change, as well as a critical need for the rural poor to participate in the delivery of ecosystem services. With this in mind, the Plan Vivo system rewards rural communities for engaging in sustainable land-use management activities that either restore or maintain ecosystem services. According to Plan Vivo, land-use change initiatives will only succeed and have permanent impacts where they meet local needs. This statement reflects the SER2011 conference theme of Re-establishing the Link between Nature and Culture, which reinforces the SER2011 Conference Organizing Committee's decision to support Plan Vivo and its Scolel Té Project.

Plan Vivo projects are run independently by in-country organizations and assessed by the Plan Vivo Foundation, a registered Scottish charity. Each 'producer' and 'producer group' (a

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group that communally owns or manages land) writes their own plan vivo, a land-management plan laying out the activities that will be implemented. Individual smallholders and community groups choose which system suits their circumstances and priorities, creating a mosaic of interventions across the project area. Plan Vivo projects emphasize the planting of native species, thus ensuring that trees are non-invasive, adapted to local conditions, and provide ecosystem services beyond carbon such as soil stability, watershed protection, and wildlife habitat/biodiversity protection.

This approach to land use diversification and establishing and maintaining indigenous tree cover is intended to make smallholders' and communities' lands more resilient to future stresses.

Each project has an in-country project coordinator that acts as a support center. Once producers and producer groups have drafted their plan vivos, the coordinator evaluates each plan to ensure that they are realistic, meaning the plans are suited to the farmers' land given local conditions (e.g. soil, topography, drainage), continue to meet the farmers' livelihood needs without displacing current food production, and are designed to improve and diversify income (e.g. from timber and non-timber products like fruits, medicines, and fuel). The project coordinator also makes sure that the plans are in line with technical requirements. Using the project's approved technical specification, which includes a methodology for calculating carbon sequestered or emissions avoided, the ecosystem services from each plan vivo can be calculated. Once this process is completed producers and producer groups enter into sale agreements with

the project coordinator, who agrees to make staged payments and provide continued technical support and training workshops. Moreover, the project coordinator monitors the implementation and management of plan vivos and makes payments when producers meet their monitoring targets. This incentivizes continued good management practices and helps cover establishment and labor costs.

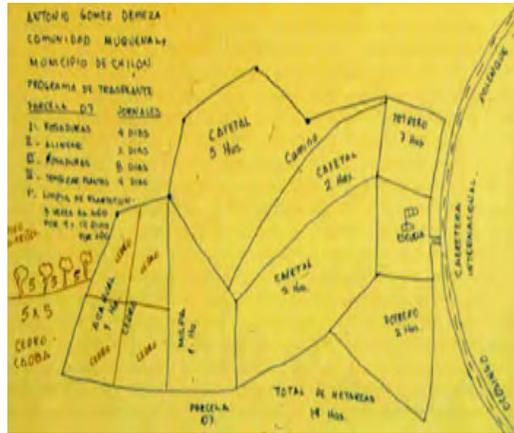
Projects are funded through the sale of Plan Vivo Certificates. Each certificate represents the long-term sequestration or reduction of one tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>, plus local ecosystem

and poverty reduction benefits. Plan Vivo Certificates are tracked through the Markit Environmental Registry, which attaches a serial number to each certificate and can be traced back to the project and year it was generated.

## The Scolel Té Project

Plan Vivo's Scolel Té Project is a community-based sustainable land use project that operates in central and northern Chiapas and northeast Oaxaca, southern Mexico. The project area covers numerous ecological and cultural regions including the Tojolobal and Tzotzil communities in the highlands and the Tzeltal and Lacandon communities in the lowland regions. This project generates verifiable CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration and emission reduction benefits via a range of land use activities involving afforestation and reforestation, agroforestry, forest restoration, and avoided deforestation. In addition to carbon sequestration and reduction benefits, it delivers environmental and social benefits, like biodiversity maintenance and poverty reduction.

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A plan vivo (one of Mexico's first) developed by Antonio Gomez Demesa in 1996.

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# View from the Chair

A Note from new SER Chair, Steve Whisenant



I am honored to serve in my new role as Chair of the SER Board of Directors. Let me briefly introduce myself. As a Charter SER member, I have twice been elected to the SER Board of Directors. Most recently, I served as your Vice Chair. In

1988, I joined the Texas A&M University faculty, where I am a Professor and Head of the Department of Ecosystem Science and Management. By teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in ecological restoration and restoration ecology, respectively, I hope to bring awareness of this emerging discipline to the next generation of young professionals.

The Society for Ecological Restoration – your Society- continues to promote ecological restoration around the world with the determined efforts of our staff and members like you. SER strives to facilitate your restoration efforts by providing you with weekly and quarterly communication materials, the most up-to-date tools and resources, and professional development and networking opportunities. We are currently in the process of a major rebranding and website redevelopment effort that aims to heighten the Society’s visibility and better facilitate processes and information sharing.

As SER members, you are afforded with many benefits, including the opportunities to learn from one another, foster friendships, and form new collaborations. I am often amazed at the power of knowledge, enthusiasm, friendship, and collaboration to achieve the goals of restoration and conservation. As I write this, SER is in the final stages of preparing for the Fourth World Conference on Ecological Restoration, which will be held in Merida, Mexico on August 21-25, 2011 and promises to be an exciting opportunity to learn and network. Attending SER regional and international meetings has always been a rewarding experience for me. The opportunity to visit with restoration practitioners, regulators, consultants, scientists, and volunteers never fails to enlighten and entertain. Furthermore, the opportunities for making like-minded friends and building productive collaborations are immense. I encourage you to take advantage of the many opportunities your membership provides and to improve SER’s effectiveness by becoming increasingly active members of the Society.

Finally, I want to express my sincere appreciation to Jim Harris, outgoing SER Board Chair, our hardworking SER Board of Directors, and former SER leaders, who continue to provide me with strategic and practical guidance. I am especially dependent on and grateful to our SER staff for their dedication and continuing efforts.

Steve Whisenant  
*Chair, SER Board of Directors*



## SER Welcomes Administrative Assistant

SER welcomed Leah Bregman on staff as Administrative Assistant this spring. Leah recently graduated with an MSc in Conservation from University College London (UCL) in London, UK, after receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies from Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. Leah is excited to be contributing to the conservation and restoration efforts of SER with her education and research experience. Leah also lends to the team her strong understanding of both the practical and political challenges facing our natural systems. Her well-established connections with the Virginia Master Naturalists and Riverbend Park in Fairfax County, as well as her international perspective from her conservation studies in England and Canada, are a true asset to the team.

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# SER2011 Carbon Offsets

*continued from page 2*



*A community technician measures a tree to check that the farmer is managing their plan vivo appropriately. If the agreed target is met, then payment to the farmer will be made.*

The Scolel Té Project is administered by the Fondo Bioclimático, a nonprofit trust fund, and coordinated by AMBIO, a Mexican nonprofit environmental cooperative. The project was formally established in 1996 and has operated on an entirely commercial, self-sufficient basis since 2002. Today, the project involves 2,500 families of indigenous Mayan and Mestizo farmers in 30 communities who have established small plantations of high value, native timber trees in tropical areas, restored degraded pine oak forests in upland areas, and protected and restored cloud forest.

## Producer Profile

Don Fernando López Aguilar joined the Scolel Té Project in 1997. Currently, Don Fernando serves as a regional technician in the Tojolabal areas and provides training to new producers and community technicians who provide assistance in the monitoring of plan vivos. Don Fernando has six hectares registered under an improved fallow system – enrichment planting with various species of pine trees grow amongst other indigenous species and medicinal plants.

Prior to the establishment of the Scolel Té Project, Don Fernando's community suffered from intense deforestation due to locals clearing land to sow maize. Through the Scolel Té Project, degraded lands are now being regenerated.

The community respects Don Fernando, who is passionate about conserving and enhancing ecosystems and always seeks to improve rural livelihoods within his community. Here, Don Fernando describes his experiences with Scolel Té:

When I think of how the Scolel Té programme started in my community, I remember that getting people participating in planting trees was not easy. People could not understand why they would receive income from outsiders and thought foreigners wanted to get their land or become owners of the new trees. I was telling them that they needed to believe in the people assessing their work and they should not trust those around them who only tell all kind of stories.

We have been protecting our lands and planting trees for years now and no one has come to take anything. I also remember that many of us did not listen to the recommendations given, we first planted tropical species such as cedar trees but they did not grow and eventually they died [the community lives in a temperate forest area]. Therefore, we had to work harder and we replaced the trees that had died with local species instead. Today, we can see that these same trees are now healthy and have grown.

It is important to understand that Plan Vivo Certificates represent much more than carbon; rather it is a measure of restoring or conserving an ecosystem that supports rural livelihoods and empowers local people to manage their resources in a sustainable manner.



*Don Fernando trains new producers.*

For more information on Plan Vivo, Scolel Té and other Plan Vivo projects visit [www.planvivo.org](http://www.planvivo.org).

# Members-in-the-News

## Rescuing Mangroves in Yucatan, Mexico

Dr. Jorge Herrera Silveira, both a member of SER and Chair of the Local Organizing Committee for the SER 2011 World Conference, was recently featured in *El Universal* for his research on the mangroves along the coast of Yucatan, Mexico. Jorge works at the National Polytechnic Institute's Research Center for Advanced Studies (CINVESTAV) as part of a group comprised of research and education institutions, civic organizations, and authority figures to gather and publicize information on the mangroves as a strategy to achieve its restoration and protection. On April 25, he sat down to answer a series of questions from the readers of *El Universal* on how these research findings are giving mangroves a stronger voice against urban development and degradation. To read the entire article, visit: <http://foros.eluniversal.com.mx/entrevistas/detalles/20197.html>.

In addition to his work with mangroves, Jorge volunteers vast amounts of time and energy to his role as Chair of the Local Organizing Committee for the SER2011 World Conference. He is a true asset to SER and to the field of restoration.

## Reversing 100 Years of Wetland Conversion

SER Members April Moulaert and Ryan Crehan have been busy restor-



*Photo courtesy of Candace Page, Free Press*

*SER Member Ryan Crehan poses in front of a restored wetland, one of many wetlands restored under The Wetland Reserve Program.*

ing lost wetlands in the state of Vermont as part of the federal Wetland Reserve Program. The program restores floodplains previously ditched and drained by farmers in the 20th century to create farm fields along the Champlain Valley. With the disappearance of the wetlands, Lake Champlain lost its protection against pollution. Farmers became frustrated with the continual flooding on the farm fields and were unable to yield substantial crops. In an effort to improve water quality in Lake Champlain, the Wetland Reserve Program offered landowners the opportunity to protect and restore wetlands on their property and provided the technical and financial support required to do so. April, who works as a wetland scientist for Ducks Unlimited, explained why the program was such a success in a recent article by Burlington Free Press: "It can be a win-win program for the landowner and the environment. The program al-

lows farmers to take their least productive fields out of agriculture, and receive a much needed — and substantial — payment for it," she said. "The environment benefits by the improved water quality and wildlife habitat that are a result of the wetland restoration." Check out the entire article online at <http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/article/20100827/NEWS02/100826026/State-restores-lost-wetlands-protect-Lake-Champlain?odyssey=nav%7Chead>.

## The Role Restoration Ecology in the Face of Climate Change

Don Falk, associate professor at the School of Natural Resources, University of Arizona and longtime SER member, spoke about the current role of restoration ecology in the face of climate change and altered world ecosystems in an interview with Island Press staffer Kate Graves on May 17th. During the interview, Falk emphasizes how restoration ecologists are already equipped with the skill set to address climate change as a direct result of working with stressed environments, and also explains a current paradigm shift that replaces restoration ecology with resilience ecology—a process which still involves knowledge of the land's history as it facilitates current ecosystem adaptation. Be sure to check out the entire interview online at <http://www.cakex.org/virtual-library/don-falk-interview>.

## Help SER support the next generation of restoration practitioners!

It's not too late to contribute to the student travel grants program for the SER2011 World Conference on Ecological Restoration. If you wish to make a donation to support this fund, please contact Caroline Bronaugh, SER Membership Coordinator, at (202) 299-9518 or [caroline@ser.org](mailto:caroline@ser.org) for more information.

# New Books & Articles

## Stepping up the ambition for carbon management: a vision for carbon-rich, cross-continental biodiversity corridors

Thomas E. Lovejoy and  
Ralph Ashton

In the April 2011 issue of *Carbon Management* Lovejoy and Ashton state that environmental challenges from climate to biodiversity to water are all interlinked because the planet operates as a biophysical system. They go on to suggest that “restoration of ecosystems at the planetary scale (reforestation, restoration of grasslands/grazing lands and modification of agriculture to return carbon to the soil) can be a significant part of the solution.” To read more about Lovejoy and Ashton’s views on ecological restoration’s important role in carbon management, as well as actions taking place around the world to build a network of carbon-rich, cross-continental biodiversity corridors, go to <http://www.future-science.com/doi/full/10.4155/cmt.11.9>.

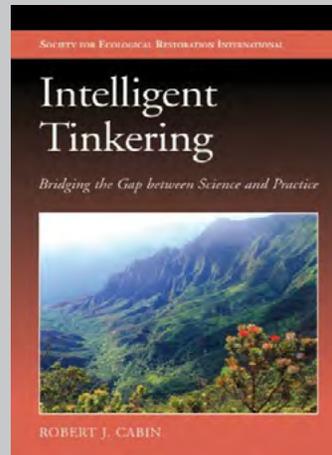
## Reforestation research in Latin America helps build better forests

Beth King

The last issue of SERNews featured a restoration project in the Philippines headed by the Environmental Leadership and Training Initiative, a joint program of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI). Today, STRI conducts research throughout the tropics and is one of the leading research institutions of the world, but it began in 1923 as a small field station on Barro Colorado Island, Panama. In

## Intelligent Tinkering *Bridging the Gap between Science and Practice*

Robert J. Cabin



In *Intelligent Tinkering*, the newest publication in the SER/Island Press book series, Robert J. Cabin uses the restoration of tropical dry forestland in Hawaii as an in-depth case study to investigate the scientific, practical, and philosophical issues associated with performing ecological restoration.

Interweaving entertaining narratives of his own on-the-ground experiences as a practicing restorationist with reflections about his scientific training and background, Cabin explores the relationship between science and practice in ecological restoration. He observes that because restoration can be complex and value-driven, its implementation often turns out to be as much interdisciplinary art as hard science. Despite the often distinct cultures and methodologies of scientists and practi-

tioners, Cabin shows how each has a vital role in effective restoration and offers suggestions for improving working relationships. Learn more about the book online at <http://magblog.audubon.org/book-excerpt-intelligent-tinkering-robert-cabin>.

To purchase this and other SER/Island Press book series titles go to <http://islandpress.org/ser/>. SER members receive a 25% discount on all titles in the SER/Island Press book series!

In addition to this book, Cabin is organizing a special session at the SER 2011 World Conference on Ecological Restoration. The first half of this session will offer a variety of ideas and perspectives for bridging the gap between restoration science and practice and for re-establishing the nature/culture link in applied restoration projects. The second half will consist of an interactive discussion between presenters and audience members. For a list of special sessions and workshops or for more information about the SER2011 Scientific Program please visit [www.ser2011.org](http://www.ser2011.org). We hope to see you this August in Merida!

# New Books & Articles

a *Forest Ecology and Management* special issue titled, “The Ecology and Ecosystem Services of Native Trees: Implications for Reforestation and Land Restoration in Mesoamerica,” STRI provides new insights on reforestation in Latin America based on 20 years of research. The issue features the Agua Salud project in the Panama Canal watershed, a 700-hectare experiment funded by the HSBC Climate Partnership that examines the ecosystem services forests provide and includes several articles that provide guidelines for land managers as they weigh environmental and economic factors in their decision making. To find out more about STRI’s reforestation efforts in Latin America go to [http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2011-05/stri-rr051711.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2011-05/stri-rr051711.php) or visit their website at [www.stri.org](http://www.stri.org).

## **Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Introduces a Framework and Map to Improve the Health of America’s Watersheds**

USDA News Release

At a USDA event to highlight the United Nation’s International Year of Forests, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the release of a new map that characterizes the health and condition of National Forest System lands in more than 15,000 watersheds across the country. The U.S. Forest Service’s Watershed Condition Classification Map is the first step in the agency’s Watershed Condition Framework published, and is the agency’s first national assessment across all 193 million acres of National Forest lands. For access to the USDA Forest Service’s Watershed Condition Framework, Watershed Condition Classification Technical Guide, and Watershed Condition Classification

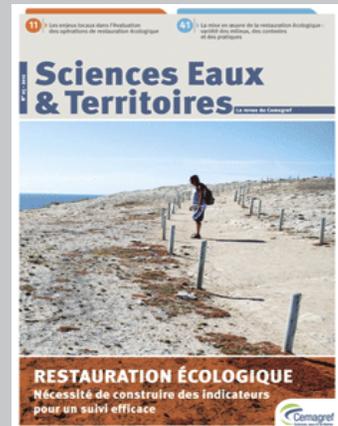
Maps, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/watershed/>.

## **Making Nature Whole: A History of Environmental Restoration**

William R. Jordan III and George M. Lubick

*Making Nature Whole*, another recent publication in the SER/ Island Press book series, presents an in-depth history of the field of ecological restoration as it has developed in the United States over the last three decades. The authors draw from both published and unpublished sources, including archival materials and oral histories from early practitioners, to explore the development of the field and its importance to environmental management as well as to the larger environmental movement and our understanding of the world.

Considering antecedents as varied as monastic gardens, the Scientific Revolution, and the emerging nature-awareness of nineteenth-century Romantics and Transcendentalists, Jordan and Lubick offer unique insight into the field’s philosophical and theoretical underpinnings. They examine specifically the more recent history, including the story of those who first attempted to recreate natural ecosystems early in the 20th century, as well as those who over the past few decades have realized the value of this approach not only as a critical element in conservation but also as a context for negotiating the ever-changing relationship between humans and the natural environment. Visit <http://islandpress.org/ser/> for more information or to purchase the book. SER members receive a 25% discount!



## **SER Promotes Ecosystem Restoration at a Global Level**

Thierry Dutoit

A special issue of the French journal, *Science Eaux & Territoires*, focuses on ecological restoration and the need to develop indicators for effective monitoring. This special issue includes a submission entitled “La Société internationale pour la restauration écologique, une association pour promouvoir la restauration des écosystèmes au niveau mondial” by Thierry Dutoit of the University of Avignon. Terry is an active member of SER’s Europe Chapter. The article details the work of SER and the Europe Chapter.

To access this special issue, including Mr. Dutoit’s article about the activities of SER and SER Europe please visit <http://www.set-revue.fr/restauration-ecologique>.

# SER Chapter News

## SER Northwest Chapter's Annual Meeting Campout

The SER Northwest Chapter is looking forward to its Annual Meeting Campout on August 6th at Seaquest State Park from 12:30 - 2:30pm, with the Chapter Board Meeting taking place earlier in the day from 9:00am – 12:00pm. The results of the most recent chapter election will be announced and the new Board members will be officially installed during the meeting. Attendees will also be engaged in conference planning for a May 2012 Joint Conference. Partners for the conference include the SER British Columbia Chapter and AFS in Victoria, as well as the Academic Council, Student Guilds and Business, Industry, Non-Profit and Government (BING) initiatives. After a long day of planning and work, attendees will be able to enjoy the 475-acre Seaquest State Park and join the chapter for a mile-long group hike through both wetland and woodland trails. All attendees need to self-register for a campsite at the park and can do so online at <https://secure.camis.com/WA/SeaquestStatePark>.

## SER Europe Hosts Workshop on Grasslands Restoration

Semi-natural grasslands are one of the most species-rich habitats in central Europe. They are also currently threatened by both agricultural intensification and land abandonment. Active restoration of such grasslands in Europe has therefore become a high priority on the European political and conservation agenda. At the end of May SER Europe's own Professor Sabine Tischew and her group at Anhalt University of Applied Sciences in Sachsen Anhalt, Germany hosted an international



*photo courtesy of Fun Places Washington*

*Northwest Chapter members will gather at Seaquest State Park for a campout this summer.*

grasslands restoration workshop. The workshop, which consisted of 240 participants, covered best practices for successful grasslands restoration. It was followed by two days of excursions to restoration field trials within the region as part of SER Europe Field Days. Participants consisted of practitioners and scientists working in restoration ecology all over Europe. This provided a rich environment for the much needed dialogue between scientists and practitioners on the driving factors for restoration success in such grasslands. The general consensus that resulted from the workshop was the need for adequate extensive management. The field trips to restored grasslands, heathland sites (where half the number of plant species in the British isles are found), and the ex-lignite mining sites were strong examples of the power of both practitioner and science driven restoration.

In addition to the grasslands workshop, members of the SER Europe Board of Directors took part in a WWF-Adena initiative to define forest ecosystem restoration standards. A draft protocol for certification has been prepared and

will soon be tested in several pilot sites in Spain!

Finally, be sure to keep up with all the details on the chapter's 8th European Conference on Ecological Restoration online at <http://www.ecer2012.eu/>.

## SER Southeast Announces 2011 Conference

The SER Southeast Chapter is teaming up with the University of Florida for their 2011 Annual Symposium and Chapter Meeting. The meeting, "New Trajectories and References for Ecological Recovery", will explore current practice and research regarding the degradation and restoration of the southeastern region, with special consideration of contemporary realities and future trajectories of ecosystems. The conference will take place on October 17-21, 2011 at the University of Florida and includes invited talks and contributed papers about restoration issues in the Southeast and field trips to selected sites in the area. Read more details about the conference or register to attend online at <http://www.ser.org/cpc/events.asp>.

## SER Midwest-Great Lakes Conference Highlights

The last issue of *SERNews* briefly outlined the Third Annual Meeting of the SER Midwest-Great Lakes Chapter which was held on April 1 - 3 this year at the University of Illinois Springfield. We wanted to give our readers more details on highlights as we recount the conference in this issue. The three day event brought in 122 individuals from nine states making it a great networking oppor-

# SER Chapter News

tunity among restorationists. The meeting program consisted of a keynote presentation, a plenary session on floodplain restoration, two workshops, 22 poster presentations, 23 contributed oral presentations, sponsorship exhibits, a guided tour of the Emiquon Restoration Project, a business meeting, and two field trips to visit restoration projects in central Illinois and northwest Indiana. The conference also included an awards ceremony where three students were presented with awards.

The chapter extends their gratitude for the support provided by our gracious meeting host, the University of Illinois Springfield, and by our fifteen meeting sponsors: Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Stantec, The Alfred O. & Barbara Cordwell Therkildsen Field Station, Great Rivers Partnership – The Nature Conservancy, ENVIRON International Corporation, Prairie Restorations Inc., Eco Logic, Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd., Lake States Fire Consortium, Spence Restoration Nursery, Northwater Consulting, University of Illinois Springfield Biology Department, Illinois State Museum, Island Press, and JFNew. We would also like to thank all presenters, moderators, tour leaders, volunteers, and attendees for their contributions to the success of the meeting.

Be sure to the chapter's website at <http://www.ser.org/content/SERMWGL.asp> at the end of July when the abstract book, video of the Dr. Roger Anderson's keynote presentation on *Midwest Oak Woodlands and Savannahs: Origins, Historic Changes, and Futuristic Trends*, and video of the plenary session *Floodplain Restoration to Sustain Large River Ecosystems* will be posted for viewing.



*Photo courtesy of SER MWGL*

*Midwest-Great Lake conference attendees socialized during a dinner at the University of Illinois.*

## Ontario Releases 6th Edition Native Plant Resource Guide

SER Ontario has officially released the 6th Edition Native Plant Resource Guide. Whether you are experienced with using native plants in your projects or are just learning, it is the ultimate resource for ecological restoration practitioners, consultants, academics and researchers, horticulture and landscaping trades, students and clubs, and individuals and groups involved in naturalization and stewardship projects, from the biggest project to the backyard.

The guide contains an updated listing of native plant growers in Ontario, including information about the types of plants available for purchase, and grower contact information. Along with grower listing, you will also find new and valuable articles about why and how to plant native species. Contributions to this guide include details on projects from across Ontario, and articles from experienced practitioners and growers on a range of topics.

All purchases of the guide fund the chapter's scholarship program, helping the next generation of

ecological restorationists in their educational activities. Check out the chapter's website at <http://se-ontario.org/> for more details on how you can obtain your guide.

## SER Chapters Take Shape in Great Basin and Southwestern United States

Several SER members have formed committees to begin organizing two new chapters of SER – a Great Basin Chapter and a Southwest Chapter! The organizing committees for both chapters have initiated the development of application materials. Final applications to become a chapter will be submitted to the SER Chapter Development Committee just prior to the SER World Conference in Merida, Mexico this August. These chapters will focus on the problems and challenges of conducting ecological restoration of arid lands degraded as a result of human population increase, energy development, exotic invasives and resulting changes in fire regimes, and climate change. The Great Basin Chapter will focus on sagebrush and associated communities, while the Southwest Chapter will marshal resources to restore ecosystems on the Colorado Plateau and the Sonoran, Mojave, and Chihuahuan Deserts. The Chapters will bring together resource specialists, restoration research scientists, and members of the public from across the two regions to exchange information and promote ecological restoration and the goals of SER.

Please contact Nancy Shaw (Great Basin) at [nshaw@fs.fed.us](mailto:nshaw@fs.fed.us) or Troy Wood (Southwest) at [trowood@umail.iu.edu](mailto:trowood@umail.iu.edu) if you would like to be a part of the establishment of or support one of these chapters.

# SER Chapter News

## British Columbia Participates in 2011 Restoration Institute

Members of SER British Columbia played a large role in supporting and participating in the 2011 Restoration Institute held on May 27 – 28 at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada. The Restoration Institute is a joint initiative of the University of Victoria's School of Environmental Studies and Restoration of Natural Systems Program created to foster an international dialogue on emerging issues in the field of ecological restoration. This year, the Institute was held in partnership with the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS) and the University of Western Australia's Ecosystem Restoration and Intervention Ecology Research Library (ERIE). Funding through the Arc Australian Laureate Fellowship to Richard Hobbs made it possible to bring ecosystem experts and policy-makers from around the world together to discuss the theme "Novel ecosystems: When and how do we intervene in the new ecological world order?". SER British Columbia was excited to co-host both a reception (funded by PICS), Saturday's lunch, and a morning workshop during which many questions arose about adapting restoration approaches to the idea of 'novel ecosystems'. Chapter board members Eric Higgs and Val Schaefer, along with SER-BC member Carol Hall, served on the Restoration Institute organizing committee at the University of Victoria. The event was a massive success.

Participants listened to presentations on examples of novel ecosystems from different parts of the globe and heard how current restoration practitioners are dealing with management in these areas. The future of ecological restoration in relation to these new plant and animal assemblages was discussed, followed by the policy implica-



*Photo courtesy of 2011 Restoration Institute*

*Participants travel to project sites for examination during the 2011 Restoration Institute.*

tions for future land managers. Dr. Terry Chapin from the University of Alaska at Fairbanks rounded out the first day's activities with the Lansdowne Lecture on "Earth Stewardship: Sustainability Challenges for a Rapidly Changing Planet".

On Saturday, two open discussions filled the morning session: the future of British Columbia ecosystems in light of changing environmental and climatic conditions; and the future of ecological restoration in British Columbia, with SER co-presenters Mike Keefer,

Dave Polster, and James Harris. Saturday afternoon included concurrent "Masterclass" sessions where selected participants presented their restoration projects. Val Schaefer then led a separate field trip to two human-altered ecosystems near the University – Mystic Vale and Mount Tolmie.

SER British Columbia would like to thank all of its members who attended the event as well as the event sponsors and organizing committee. Visit <http://www.restorationinstitute.ca/> for more information on the Restoration Institute.

## Wetlands International launches new WRSB webpage

Wetlands International recently launched its Wetlands Restoration Specialist Group (WRSB) webpage. The WRSB is a global network of wetland restoration specialists whose role is to actively promote the successful restoration and conservation of wetlands worldwide. With this new interactive webpage, wetland

restoration specialists around the world have access to an expert database, case studies, publications, and a calendar of events. For more information about WRSB visit [www.wetlands.org](http://www.wetlands.org). To join WRSB, send your name, address, contact details, and areas of special interest to Kevin Erwin at [klerwin@environment.com](mailto:klerwin@environment.com).